A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# ENGLISH NATION.

**Thursday**, January 24. 1706.

I Entred the laſt Review upon the unpleaſant Work of ſhowing the Methods, by which our antient Nobility and Gentry, were reduc'd from the terrible Greatneſs and Power they poſſeſs'd in *England* before the Days of King *Henry* VII.

It was the Maxim of that wiſe Prince, that the only way to check the haughty Spirits of the *Engliſh* Nobility, was to make them poor; to do this by Force was out of his Power, and had ruin'd ſeveral of his Predeceſſors; but the trueſt Policy was to lay ſome Baits before them to bring them to do it themſelves: And this was the grave Undertaking, and which he effectually brought to paſs, and left as his laſt Advice to his Son; That to bring them perfectly under, it was abſolutely neceſſary he ſhould keep himſelf rich, and make them poor.

I inſtanc'd how he brought this to paſs, and how erecting an unuſual Gaiety and Magnificence in his Court, ſo took, eſpecially with the younger Gentry, that they ſoon became Beggars by their forward expenſive way of living; and then to ſupport themſelves, were glad to become Servants to the Court, and accept of Places and Sallaries under the Crown ——— This entail'd Meanneſs and Poverty upon their Families, and gave the Crown the entire Conqueſt over that Power, which never recovered it ſelf, or was ever formidable afterward.

'Tis certain that this new extravagance encreaſed Trade; and that Money, that formerly was ſpent in the Country in building Caſtles, ſtoring up Arms, and furniſhing Troops, being now ſpent in Ruffs, Ribbands, Toys and Trifles, uſual in the Gaieties

Gaieties of Dreſs and Equipage, fill'd the Town to be ſure with the little uſeleſs Trades depending upon ſuch Fopperies; and this is the poor amends the Extravagance of great Families brings to Trade. This is the mighty Equivalent, the luxurious Living of our Gentry brings to the Publick in the ſtead of raiſing, continuing, and in a ſuitable Meaſure ſupporting a more ſubſtantial Grandeur, by preſerving their Eſtates, and ſpending a neceſſary Proportion among their Neighbours.

Now, that I may not all at once diſoblige the innumerable Crowd of Tradeſmen, who depend upon the Extravagance of the Gentry, who plead for Luxury, not as a Vice in Manners, but as a Vertue in Trade, that this poor Paper may not at once be D——d by all the *Milliners*, *Lace men*, *Perfumers*, *Perriwig-makers*, *Glovers*, *Ribbon-Weavers*, and the ten thouſands of the Aſſiſtants to the Pride of Courts, and the Gallantry of both Sexes; I deſire to ſtate the true Medium between the two Extremes in this Caſe; and to tell the World, how by a Common Prudence the Gentry might ſupport their own Expence, and Trade ſuffer no Manner of Decay.

All the Evils that attend us in *England*, come from our extending things beyond their due Mediums, and from running into unhappy Extremes. I could run this into abundance of Particulars; and perhaps it would be true in every thing, I am ſure it would be true in Publick Matters, as we have innumerable Inſtances in our daily Experience; but I would avoid long Digreſſions with my utmoſt Diligence, and therefore in this Caſe confine it only to Trade.

The Gaiety and Splendour of the *Engliſh* Court is, ſince the times above mentioned, arriv'd to a Degree ſo extraordinary in it ſelf, and is extended by long practice to the whole Nation, that to put an entire ſtop to it, would ruin thouſands of Families, and be a prodigious Shock to Trade; and I cannot tell, whether ſuppreſſing the Vice would not be more fatal, than its Continuance, by ſtarving Multitudes of Poor, who now depend upon the various Branches of Publick Vanity.

As I have noted the beginning of the Gentries Ruin in the Time of King *Hen.* VII. and his Son, ſo 'tis neceſſary to add here, that in thoſe Reigns the *Engliſh* Nation began firſt to increaſe in Trade; the Wool that formerly went abroad, began now to be Manufactur'd at home, and this enrich'd the Country, kept our People at home, drew Crowds of Foreigners over to us, and encreas'd our Numbers of Families.

In Queen *Elizabeth*'s long and flouriſhing Reign, aided by the Perſecutions of the Catholick League in *France*, and the Duke *D' Alva* in *Flanders*; Infinite Numbers of Proteſtants of thoſe Nations ſwarm'd into *England*, encourag'd by that Wiſe Queen, who well knew that Numbers of People are the Wealth and Strength of a Nation, and that Manufactures always make a Nation flouriſh.

Theſe vaſt Additions to Trade enrich'd the Commonalty; and now Mechanick Wealth began to encreaſe prodigiouſly.

To Queen *Elizabeth* ſucceeded K. *James* I. the exceſſive Vanity and Luxury of whoſe Court prepar'd; and the Civil Wars in the Reign of his Son, abſolutely finiſh'd the Ruin of the *Engliſh* Gentry, and oblig'd them to be meer Slaves to the Errors of the Times; I ſay nothing of the Reign of King *Charles* II. becauſe I would rather cover than expoſe a Reign, in which and from whence other more politick Deſigns laid the Foundation of the Ruin not of the Nobility only, but of the whole Nation in debauching the Morals as well as Habits and Cuſtoms of the People in General.

Thus by degrees we have brought Vice and Extravagance to be abſolutely neceſſary to Trade; and People became Advocates for the Devil, meerly to ſave themſelves from ſtarving; the Nation ſeems under an unhappy Neceſſity to uphold their Follies, in order to preſerve their Trade; and a miſerable Article it is: What a mighty Proſpect of Reformation muſt this ſhew us, that whenever we come to reform our Manners, we ſhall ruin our Manufactures; that when our Vices come to be Cramp'd and Reſtrain'd, our Trade will ſink with it; this is juſt as if we ſhould forbid our Magiſtrates

Puniſh-

Punishing Drunkenness, for fear of lessening the Excise; and Encourage all manner of Excesses, to raise the Customs upon Wine; such helps to Commerce as these are Fatal to the general Good, and at the same time they assist in us Trade, undo us in Manners, and lay the Foundation of a General Mischief to us and to our Posterity.

The *Medium* therefore to all these Extremes is to be found out, and that is, to bring our Fashions and Customs to such a Government, as may at the same time that they Correct Extravagancies, not overthrow Decency; Reform Ill Manners, and not Destroy Trade: And of this middle between the two Extremes, I shall take the Freedom to speak in the Next.

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# MISCELLANEA.

I Gave my Reasons in my last, for Appointing this part of the Paper, to pursue, *as occasion shall offer*, any necessary Accidental Thoughts upon the Publick Matters; in which I hope to be both useful and Diverting: And tho' it may make this part of the Paper sometimes longer, than at first I intended, yet I hope it shall always have Brevity enough to make it Tolerable, and Reason enough to Excuse its Prolixity.

I cannot but think it very proper, to take Notice here, of a Practice begun upon the Nation, in a very few Months, *in a degree, more than usually Notorious, I mean*, of Bullying the Government in Printed Pamphlets, Rallying and Railing at our Governours, Bespattering and throwing Dirt at the Ministry, *tho' hitherto none of it sticks, but Universally flyes back in their own Faces*; and this by Heads and Hands, who, had they not been driven to their last Shifts, would have scorn'd a way so mean and Mechanick, as Fighting under the Shelter of an Anonymous Appearance.

I had really said nothing of this, but for the following Reason; we have had a Rumour upon Uncertain Grounds for sometime past, that the *Memorial* was coming to Light; that is, That the Authors were to be Detected and Discovered; if this had been all, I had said nothing, for I was always backward to prompt any Mans Misfortunes; if the Authors are Discovered, *God send them a good Deliverance*; they have one Advantage of me, they are fallen into better hands than I had the Fortune to fall into; Hands that won't break the Claim of Right, by Exorbitant Punishments and Fines, *ultra Tenementum*.

But the occasion of my taking Notice of it here, is this; when our Friends of that Party are told, the Authors are Discovered, What is their Reply? *Ay, ay, say these People*, they have some scent of it, but they find the Authors a Party too strong for them; and it falls among some People, that are too big to be meddled with, that they don't care to have any thing to do with them; and now they have got Sight of them, they are at a loss; they don't care to fasten, for fear they should come into his Fate, that had a Dog by the Ears, and durst neither *let go nor hold*.

Well, well, Gentlemen, say I, let them alone; let us see but who they are, and we shall soon see, whether any body be too big for the Justice of the Nation; and whether any Crime is too big to be declar'd so, or any Criminal too big to be Punish'd; to this I am Insolently Answer'd; Why, what if you have them? when you bring them to Examination, they'll tell you as the *Parson of Sutton* did the other Day; that 'tis true, they did Write it, and they are ready to own it; that 'tis all true and Reasonable, and they are only Sorry they said no more; and you may do your worst with them.

I confess, 'tis the Impudence of this Discourse, makes me Repeat it to the World;

World; for as first I am very sure Mr. *Stevens*, tho' he had the Folly to Write such a Libel, as the *Letter to the Author of the State Memorial*, had not Courage enough to make such an Answer; so I cannot be easily brought to believe, there will any Man be found so harden'd, that will stand so boldly, to so really Criminal a thing as the *Memorial*; in which the whole Nation is Lampoon'd, the Church of *England* and her Principles of Loyalty Personated, in what her Soul Abhors, the Government horribly Buffoon'd, the Ministry Bully'd, and all the People of *England*, Alarm'd and Surpriz'd.

If there are Men to be found, that can Face Justice with so much Guilt in their Face, they must be harden'd beyond the Common Rate of Mankind, and I can say little to them, till I enquire farther into their Characters, which in due time, will I suppose, be farther known to the World.

But I cannot but come a little to consider the first Article, that these should be such Capital Criminals, that the Queen and Ministry durst not Punish; I must own, when the Government comes to a Condition, to be afraid to Execute Justice; I shall expect their continuance to be very short; and when Men set up, to be thought too big for a Government to Punish, 'tis high time for such a Government to Attempt their Correction, by way of Experiment as well as Justice; Harden'd Sinners, Unpunish'd by Heaven, the Scripture says, *began to think God Almighty such a one as themselves*, and so resolv'd to Sin on. When Princes forbear too long to Execute a just Vengeance on Capital Offenders, the Connivence prompts the Wretches to think themselves Establish'd in Crimes, and that because the Prince does not, therefore he dares not strike. If this be the Prospect, from which these Gentlemen flatter themselves, they have Reason from the Desert of their Actions; I wish nothing, but that the Proof may be plain, and if the Government does not exert its Legal Authority to such a due length, as to be a Terror to the like Methods, they shall have my Vote, to be Insulted by all the Party, and Laugh'd at by the whole World.

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